Religion and Belief and Social Work: Making sense of competing priorities

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Religion and Belief and Social Work: Making sense of competing priorities

Sheila Margaret FURNESS

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Division of Social Work and Social Care, School of Social and International Studies, University of Bradford

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Sheila Margaret Furness

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Abstract

This PhD by published work consists of:

- two single authored articles in refereed journals;
- four jointly authored articles in refereed journals;
- one jointly authored editorial;
- one jointly authored book, including four single authored chapters;

They were published in the period 2003-2013. Philip Gilligan submitted the jointly written publications as part of his submission for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work in 2013.

This thesis identifies substantive findings, theoretical insights, new questions and practice/policy implications arising from the published work. The body of work has and continues to stimulate debate about the need to recognise and appreciate the significance and relevance of religion and related belief in the lives of people accessing health and social care services in the UK. It outlines the general relevance and impact of religion and related belief and explores questions and research concerned with the extent to which social work takes these

matters into account in its practices, polices and professional training. It prompts practitioners to reflect on their own and others' religious beliefs by providing a framework of nine related principles to assist them in their professional practice. One key finding is the need for service providers and policy makers to develop new services that are more responsive to the diverse needs of people living in the UK today by recognising and adopting some of the diverse helping strategies employed and imported by different communities.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the input from students and practitioners who contributed to my research into this area of enquiry. Students willingly engaged in workshops and practitioners gave up their time to share case material where religion had been significant either to them or their service users.

I would like to acknowledge the valued input of my colleague, Philip Gilligan who shared my interest to promote and contribute to the development of resources, materials and opportunities to discuss the relationship between religion and social work.

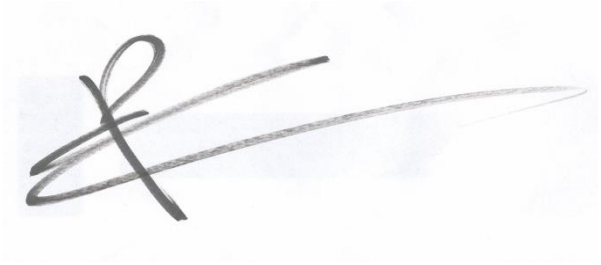
My thanks go to Professor Charles Husband who acted as my mentor and shared his wisdom and expertise in matters of race, multiculturalism and cultural competence to assist me to write this thesis.

Dedication

To my parents who would have been very proud of my achievements. I thank them both and sad that they did not live to share my journey.

Statement by Dr Philip Gilligan, Visiting Research Fellow, Division of Social Work & Social Care, University of Bradford

1. **I have read Sheila Furness' list of publications in her statement to be submitted by her for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work.**
2. **I confirm that Sheila Furness is the joint author of five articles listed of which I am also an author and that we did equal amounts of work in producing them (articles 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).**
3. **I confirm that Sheila Furness is the joint author of three chapters and the appendix of our jointly authored book (article 8 *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making a difference)* and that we have done equal amounts of work in producing them (Chapters 1, 3, 11 and Appendix).**
4. **I confirm that Sheila Furness is the sole author of three full chapters and the second half of one chapter of our jointly authored book (article 8 *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making a difference)* and that they were written by her (Chapters 5, 7, 8 and 6).**



Signed:

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Chapter 1 Statement regarding significance and coherence of contribution

The population of Britain is continually changing and evolving with the flux of new economic migrants, international students, tourists and visitors, those joining family members already living in this country and those seeking asylum and refuge. One challenge facing the state is how to respond to emerging social issues and demands on all of the public services from these different groups along with continuing to meet the emerging and ongoing needs of its more stable resident population.

I have a responsibility as a social work lecturer to ensure that training and qualified social workers have appropriate skills and knowledge to appreciate and respond to the needs of those accessing social care services in this country. Since taking up my post in 2002, the focus of my research and writing has concerned religion, related belief and social work; improving good practice in care homes for older people, and the motivation and conduct of training and qualified social workers. This thesis will outline the contribution and impact of my work in relation to religious belief and social work.

There are four main areas of the literature presented in this thesis.

Firstly the research is innovative and original in that it has both stimulated and informed debate about the need to recognise and appreciate the significance of religion and related belief in the lives of service users and the impact of personal religious belief on professional practice. In the UK,

this particular focus on religion had been given relatively little attention by practitioners and social work academics (Art. 1, Art. 2 and Art. 3). Early anti-racist policies also failed to acknowledge and engage with matters of faith (Patel *et al*., 1998).

The second area of impact is the contribution to the development of resources to enhance professional practice. There are only two other British books that focus specifically on religion and social work (Moss, 2005 and Ashencaen Crabtree *et al*, 2008) as opposed to spirituality and social work (Mathews, 2009; Holloway and Moss, 2010 and Crisp, 2010). These books are very different in content and style to our book (Art. 8). This book and subsequent article (Art. 4) outlines the Furness/Gilligan framework that prompts practitioners to reflect on their own and others' religious beliefs and recognise when religion is significant promoting a deeper consideration of these factors. The publications presented in this submission reflect the overwhelming majority of the literature and guidance available to social work practitioners, managers and educators on this subject. The research and material has been systematically collected and developed as an applied body of professional knowledge and is cited by a range of researchers and educators across the world in their teaching, books and other publications on a regular basis.

The third area of impact is the potential contribution to policy formation. Although this is at an early stage there is some evidence to suggest that this body of knowledge provides a new understanding of religion in terms of starting with the subjective experience of religious belief rather

than imposing a narrow definition of religion on those belonging to a particular faith.

The fourth area of impact is the use of the research in professional work or practice. There are some indications that practitioners are adopting key principles from the Furness/Gilligan framework and recognising that their own beliefs, whether affiliated to a particular religion or not, affect their assessment, judgement and interventions with service users. The work presented here has made a very significant contribution to raising the salience of this issue in contemporary social work theory and practice.

Chapter 2:1 Introduction

I was appointed to my current post as social work lecturer at the University of Bradford in 2002. Previously, I was employed as a social work lecturer at Bradford and Ilkley Community College and carried out largely teaching and administrative duties (1994-2002). Prior to taking up this post, I completed a part-time Master's degree, Managing Change in the Community whilst working as a registration and inspection officer employed by Bradford Metropolitan Council (1991-93). My employer allowed me to conduct a mixed method small scale study to investigate elder abuse within a residential setting to fulfil part of the requirements of this degree. Following a presentation of the findings at a conference organised by the University of Huddersfield, I was invited to contribute to a book co-edited by Juliet Cheetham entitled *The Working of Social Work* (1998). This gave me my first taste of writing for publication (Furness, 1998).

On appointment to this post, there was a clear expectation that I identify an area of expertise, conduct research, publish in peer reviewed journals and complete a PhD. An obvious area of enquiry for me was to investigate how to improve good practice in care homes for older people based on my experience of inspecting them.

In order to update my research skills and knowledge and as preparation for undertaking a PhD, I successfully completed three of the research modules at the University of Bradford graduate school. One assessment required me

to identify and critique a research article. In my search for relevant articles, I came across a study carried out by two Americans, Michael Sheridan and Catherine Amato-von Hemert (1999) where they investigated social work students' views and experiences about religion and spirituality in education and practice. This article along with my experience of living and working in Bradford, led me to reflect on how I could equip social work students better to become more aware of their own beliefs and develop their knowledge and skills to work more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. This was the start of the journey that has culminated in the first book to consider the significance and impact religion and related belief across the whole range of social work practice in England (Art. 8).

Although there has been some interest and attention given to the relationship between religion, spirituality and social work practice the topic remains controversial and contested in terms of appreciating and accepting its wider relevance, significance and contribution to social work practice. Greater attention has been paid to recognising and exploring the significance and impact of religion and spirituality in US social work education, training and practice. Furman et al, (2007, p. 243) trace the development of this interest, most notably in the 1980s and mid-1990s, that led to a National Society for Spirituality and Social Work and from 1995 when the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reintroduced references to religion and spirituality in the social work curriculum. Likewise the British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS) was officially launched in 2010 and reference to religion and spirituality is more implicit rather than explicit in the British social work

curriculum. Internationally, a number of authors have contributed to the growing literature (Lloyd, 1997; Canda, 1998; Patel *et al*., 1998; Nash and Stewart, 2002; Moss, 2005; Gilligan and Furness, 2006; Holloway, 2007a; Crisp, 2008, 2010; Gray, 2008; Canda and Furman, 2009; Mathews, 2009; Furness and Gilligan, 2010a; MacKinlay, 2010; Moss and Holloway, 2010). There has been a longer tradition of recognising the place of spirituality by the nursing profession, particularly in respect of palliative care, death and dying (Holloway, 2006).

One cannot define religion or spirituality without first acknowledging that the bases of all of our actions are beliefs that assist us to determine our lives' goals and objectives. Beliefs give us purpose but when challenged we may either discard or change them or seek further supporting evidence. Beliefs can be directed towards a person, a set of ideas or an abstract principle and guide our choice of goals and decisions as in 'belief in my son', 'belief in democracy' and 'belief in God' (Coleman, 2011: 1). Religiousness includes beliefs about a personal God and involves prescribed rituals, worship and a commitment to a religion's belief system (Hunt, 2005). Beliefs about the nature of humankind, its purpose and destiny, and its relationship with the world are increasingly referred to as spiritual beliefs. Spirituality has come to mean life and equated with personal, intimate, experiential experiences, and for some may be connected to their relationship with the sacred (Heelas, 2002, p.358).

Crisp (2010), in her book, finds that there is no consensus about the relationship between religion and spirituality, let alone about agreed definitions of each of these terms. The blurring between religion and spirituality is common in the literature but religion and spirituality are not necessarily synonymous (Peberdy, 2000: 73). Holloway and Moss (2010) identify that for some spirituality is an aspect of religion whereas others consider religion to be a subset of spirituality. They advocate for spirituality to be an inclusive concept that accommodates those with a religious worldview as well as those who do not. Spirituality is more than just an academic discipline as essentially it is "relational, action centred, and about making connections with one's own spirit and these different aspects of life" (Robinson, 2008: 36).

Social workers need to be aware of differing interpretations and recognise that all constructs are subject to cultural variation and renegotiation that lead to continuity and change. Some individuals may not be comfortable using the term/s at all whereas others may not be able to separate their spirituality from their religious identity. Rather than impose a narrow definition and interpretation of either term, Beckford (2003) advocates an interpretivist approach that accepts how individuals define their beliefs and practices. Therefore the focus should be on finding out about the beliefs of the individual and not assuming that all those belonging for example, to a particular faith share the same beliefs. Coleman (2011) recognises ambiguity in discourses of spirituality and ageing in terms of generational differences in

communication and supports a view of studying belief in the context of people's daily lives.

In order to deal with some of the barriers and resistance towards the contested nature of these terms, as a starting point it is important that we reflect on our own understanding of what spirituality and religion mean to us. In the early literature concerning nursing care and more specifically, the spiritual care of dying people, Peberdy (2000:73) outlines a range of ways that people seek meaning by questioning the cause or purpose of the suffering, existence after death or for those affiliated to a religion then the relationship between judgement and after life. There are resources to assist health practitioners to better understand and care for those who are dying or bereaved from each of the major faiths (Johnson and McGee, 1998; Firth, 2000a; 2000b). However, the essence of 'good' spiritual care lies in the manner in which practitioners carry out their tasks and duties sensitively through active listening, encouraging others to express their concerns and offering appropriate support (Sheldon, 1997; Peberdy, 2000).

The literature review of end of life care commissioned by the Department of Health identified four main approaches to spiritual assessment – recognition and identification of spirituality and spiritual issues, measurement of spirituality and religiosity, narrative and biographical approaches to exploring spirituality and the spirituality domain (Holloway *et al*., 2010). Research has informed the development of several spiritual assessment tools with the aim

of aiding health practitioners to develop spiritual competence (King *et al.*, 1995; Ross, 1997; Hodge, 2001; Cobb, 2001; McSherry and Ross, 2002; McSherry, 2006; Canda and Furman, 2009). In the UK literature, Moss and Holloway (2010, p.42) have developed a model for conceptualising spirituality and social work. They suggest that religion and spirituality are complex phenomena and share the potential for good and for bad. It is vital to recognise both elements as there have been serious injuries and fatalities where social workers have ignored signs and indicators of abuse and neglect on the basis of an unhealthy and unquestioning acceptance of others' religious and cultural traditions and practices (Briggs et al., 2011; Laming, 2003; The National Working Group on Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief, 2012).

Despite the development of inclusive frameworks which conceptualise the links between 'religion' and 'spirituality', most of the social work literature focus primarily on the generic elements of spirituality rather than the specifics of religious belief and affiliation. My contribution has been original in that the focus is on the latter and its implications for social work education. However, I would like to acknowledge the contributory and complementary work of others in this key area of practice.

2.2 Key constructs: Making links to social theory

As a legacy to learning and further research, it is important to identify the development and contribution of a range of theoretical works from different disciplines that have informed my research and current thinking. This understanding can assist further investigation into how religion and related beliefs inform daily actions, behaviour and decision-making. Religion is contentious in that it is a potential source of strength and social capital, as well as conflict that can lead to competing priorities for those who identify with a religion and others who may view religion with suspicion, fear, avoidance, ignorance or intolerance in a plural society.

2.3 Religion and culture

Most religions are characterised by sacred texts that include tales about the creation of the world (cosmogony), tales about evil and suffering in the world (theodicy), a broad vision of ethical life (how people should behave) and rituals, meditations, worship, festivals and regulations on hygiene, diet and sex (Macionis and Plummer, 2007:611). Although believers of a particular religion accept certain beliefs and ideals there are differences as well as connections in how those affiliated to a particular religion feel, think, act and relate to others. Pargament (1997: 40) examines some of the features that make up religious pathways. Firstly, he identifies a variation in terms of connectedness to the sacred. Each religious practice (prayer, giving to charity, chanting a mantra) “can take on a sacred connotation by virtue of its

divine associations" and elicit wide ranging feelings. Secondly, religion varies in terms of its importance and embeddedness in peoples' lives. It can be an integral part of daily living or restricted to certain times, situations or transitions. Thirdly, for some religion is an active search for meaning whereas for others this is passive in that they adopt religious beliefs and other values, assumptions and traditions of their parents and generations before them. For some, religious beliefs form part of their habitus and are an unconscious and knowing rather than thinking worldview. Deeply engrained habits, skills and dispositions are a physical embodiment of cultural experiences. In this sense, religious beliefs become an unquestioned frame of reference and precede and structure everyday experience. Each year, I facilitate a workshop with MA social work students and one aim is to provide an opportunity for them to question and articulate their beliefs, whether religious or not, in order to raise their consciousness and awareness of such matters. In this way, students are invited to think about their unquestioned frames of reference. Student feedback indicates that some have been able to move from an unconscious knowing position to a conscious thinking position where they realise assumptions they have made about their own and others' religious beliefs. Giddens structuration theory conceptualizes 'structure' as 'rules and resources' used by actors in interaction. Rules specify rights and obligations that form the basis of our ontological security or sense of trust in social situations. Our practical consciousness allows us to anticipate and interpret the actions of others. There are sanctions against members who fail to conform, comply or sustain routines. For Giddens, individuals have the capacity to be reflexive by

reflecting on their actions and to act according to their intentions. A sense of discursive consciousness allows people to rationalise their actions and opens up the possibility for change (Boucaut, 2001).

Lastly, religious pathways vary in how believers carry out worship as well in their social life. For example, some congregations are hierarchical bureaucratic structures, others are insular whilst some encourage sharing of problems. All of these structures and practices can impact on the well-being and religiosity of its members and a better understanding of religious diversity can offer potential support systems to members as well as the helping professions.

Over the centuries, authors from a range of disciplines have defined religion as well as given consideration as to the purpose of religion and how it shapes everyday life by providing meaning and purpose to believers. Early influential theorists such as Durkheim (2008) and Weber (1965) examined the relationship between society and religion as an institution and its contribution in terms of shaping society. Durkheim argued religion made up the collective life of society and that its three main functions were to: maintain social cohesion through a sense of belonging through shared rituals, values and symbols; to maintain social control by conferring legitimacy on the political system and promoting cultural norms such as marriage and reproduction using religious justification and lastly to provide meaning and purpose by marking key life stages such as birth, marriage and

death by religious observances that enhance spiritual awareness (Macionis and Plummer, 2008: 611-12).

Phenomenological methods of studying religious traditions such as Christianity and Hinduism, have treated each religion as largely self-contained and discrete entities that are explored in terms of their characteristic phenomena from the perspective of the believer. Ethnographic approaches aim to explore how identification with a particular religion relates to wider society and social change (Woodhead, 2002: 1) In order to do this well, researchers have to acknowledge their own subjectivity and bias when collecting, analysing and interpreting data (D'Cruz and Jones, 2004, Sarantakos, 2005).

In my work, I favour mixed method approaches that capture quantitative data about the social characteristics of participants and a broadly feminist , interpretivist approach that takes into account individual explanations and meanings attached to situations and experiences. In my other research work, I have carried out action research where I worked alongside another researcher and participants who were either relatives or friends of people living in care homes (Furness and Torry, 2009).

As a White British woman and social worker, I am very aware of structural inequalities and explanations of gendered patterns of inequality based on patriarchal relations and sex roles (Dominelli, 2002; Mullaly, 2010; Furness, 2012). Sacred texts and teachings can be interpreted in different ways and

social workers and other professionals need to be mindful of the effects of encouraging individuals and their families to be accepting of their situation particularly if this is damaging their mental health and wellbeing. In terms of domestic violence, perpetrators may rationalise their actions by claims that 'the bible says' or other holy book explains, excuses or justifies the abuse (Fortune *et al*., 2010: 320). Often, responses by faith leaders and well-meaning family members invite the person to carry on by gaining strength from prayer and worship but these responses fail to recognise the abuse and instead imply victims are to blame for their situation.

However, it is important not to make assumptions about how people will practise their religious beliefs but explore with individuals their understanding and how this translates into everyday life. Constructivist learning theory suggests that we all have a framework of understanding that we use to make sense of experiences. This is an active process of learning where we are constantly receiving (accommodating) new knowledge and changing (reframing) in a way that enables people to learn from past experiences (Hunter, 2008; Maltby *et al*., 2010). This approach opens up the possibility of capturing change and adaptation to cultural experiences/influences that impact on them.

Culture is made up of shared values, beliefs, attitudes, expectations and practices of those people who identify with a particular social grouping. Culture includes religion and other belief systems, systems of morality, care giving and family structures (Hugman, 2013:4). Values are prescriptive and

abstract standards about what constitutes good and bad behaviour. Beliefs define the matters that we accept or reject and shape the way we think, the judgements we make, the perceptions we hold about people and our identity (Beckett and Maynard, 2012:6).Culture, therefore is key to understanding some of the differences, conflicts and dilemmas facing us and where religion is significant it is vital to consider the influence of religious values and religious beliefs on the lives of those delivering and using social care services. It is important to recognise the syncretic nature of culture and religious beliefs in that it changes over time in response to the impact of diasporic experiences and hybridity on lived cultures. One method that can assist workers to develop greater sensitivity and understanding of cultural difference is cultural competence.

2.4 Cultural competence

Cultural competence as a process of learning about self and the relationship with other cultures and worldviews captured my attention as a possible way of assisting social work students to develop greater awareness and sensitivity about the differing needs of service users. The term itself is problematic as it implies an essentialist, fixed and static notion of culture. The concept originated in the United States and a number of authors have developed models of transcultural competence to assist health workers, in particular, to become more aware of the diverse cultural needs and responses of patients in their care (Purnell and Paulanka 1998; Papadopoulos *et al.,* 1998; Campinha-Bacote,1999).

In 2001, The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) published ten standards for cultural competence. In the United States, cultural diversity in health and social care initially was largely associated with race and ethnicity. The revised code recognises that diversity includes other aspects of identity (gender, social class, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, age, and physical and mental abilities).

"*Cultural competence refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each*" (NASW, 2001: 11).

The British Association of Social Workers' (BASW) Code of Ethics makes no explicit mention of cultural competence but instead states that "social workers should recognise and respect the diversity of the societies in which they practise, taking into account individual, family, group and community differences " (BASW, 2012: 9). In the health arena, the importance of training health staff to become aware of diverse health beliefs and values is promoted in policy and practice. Cultural competence training can assist practitioners to become more sensitised and aware of peoples' circumstances, and of the factors that affect their day to day living but in achieving this they face a number of challenges. On an individual level, they

must be ready to actively engage in learning, reflection and be open to change. Conflict can arise where there are competing claims to self-determination and services (whose rights take precedence) and recognition that knowledge and meaning around culture is controlled by dominant ideologies, for example myths around ‘they look after their own’ (Harrison and Burke, 2014: 77-78).

Other western countries such as Australia and New Zealand have followed the lead taken by the United States and included specific commitments to achieving culturally appropriate services in their social work professional codes (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010).

Since the 1970s and 1980s theory and research into intercultural communication has grown. Generally intercultural communication involves communication between people from different ethnic backgrounds but also includes all aspects of culture and communication (Gudykunst, 2003). Kim’s theory suggests a way to understand some of the commonalities shared by immigrants and refugees, who either come to live in a new country on a temporary or long-term basis. Most short-term and long-term cross-cultural adaptation studies tend to focus on the difficulties experienced by new-comers and justify this by identifying ways to ease their transition (Kim, 2003). Kim’s work is based on an interactive and integrative systems approach and her research explores how and why individuals adapt to a new environment. Strangers (new comers) have to learn aspects of the host country and this process involves a crisis where they may have to abandon

some aspects of their own cultural behaviours as a compromise. Each individual selects to some extent new learning as an adaptation. Some people are more willing and ready to embrace change if this meets their own interests and needs. This process of acculturation involves suspending and over time losing some old habits. Early on, individuals experience identity conflict rooted in a resistance to change and desire to keep old customs (Kim, 2005: 383). This understanding of reaction and response to new and challenging situations can be usefully transferred to assist social workers to work with others on cognitive, affective and behavioural levels. On a cognitive level, social workers need to recognise that their responses are shaped by familiar and safe cultural norms and be prepared to respond more creatively and flexibly rather than holding on to predetermined or set ways. On an affective level this is achieved by showing empathy and understanding and being open to difference on an emotional level. On a behavioural level, social workers can combine insights and feelings in order to learn to be more open to deal and cope with the unfamiliar through a willingness to extend their behavioural repertoire (Gerrish *et al.* 1996: 28; Husband and Torry, 2004).

Historically western health and social care services have been constructed and delivered with mono-cultural populations in mind (Papadopoulos *et al*., 2004). Eurocentrism tends to position the 'white ethnic ' group as the norm and other non-white groups are expected to conform and fit into existing services (Talabere, 1996). Transcultural nursing models have tended to concentrate on learning about self and others at the expense of ignoring

power and knowledge and any analysis of prejudice and discrimination in terms of how it is replicated and reproduced.

Society is constructed in terms of systems and structures designed to maintain and influence individual and group actions and behaviour. For example, legal systems are in place to protect individual rights and to keep law and order; an education system provides people with the necessary knowledge and skills to participate and contribute as citizens in society and religious organisations tend to the spiritual needs of the population (Macionis and Plummer, 2008; Mullaly, 2010). Critical social theory recognises social structures as the site of oppression because in the main they continue to serve and act in the interests of particular social groups and "reflect and reinforce the assumptions, views, needs, values, culture and social position of this group" (Mullaly, 2010: 24).

The dominant or privileged group benefits at the expense of others. This is often not a conscious or intentional act or choice but relations between different groups have become accepted and internalised into our unconscious and are enacted through processes of socialisation and are embedded into the fabric of our social structures through roles, rules, policies and practices (Haney, 1989 cited in Mullaly, 2010: 25).

The ontological basis of each division is different in that class is grounded in the economic means of production and consumption; gender is based on social roles defined by sexual/biological differences and sexuality relates to

discourses of ‘them’ (Yuval-Davies, 2006:201). The singling out of social divisions can be misleading as it leads us to think about divisions in isolation, consider them to be homogeneous and fail to recognise their interrelatedness. In terms of religious affiliation, it is informative to find out how individuals practise their faith and how their beliefs influence their lifestyles and worldviews but attention also needs to be given to how other aspects of their identity shape and affect their responses and experiences.

2.5 Intersectionality

Crenshaw (1991) first coined the term and since then feminist researchers have applied this framework to better understand the intersections between different aspects of identity and acknowledge other variables (Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2009; Luft and Ward, 2009; Lockhart and Danis , 2010). The theory seeks to explain how various biological, social and cultural categories interact on multiple and simultaneous levels contributing to social inequality. This replaces dichotomous, binary thinking about power. When we categorise people by ethnicity, religion or any other characteristic then these labels can distort our perceptions, create ‘us’ and ‘them’ boundaries and prevent us from recognising commonalities (Berger and Guidroz, 2010:84). In the case of religious affiliation, it is vital not to assume that all those identifying with a particular religion all are the same or share the same experiences. Gender roles and socialisation along with religious affiliation place societal expectations on women and men to take on specific roles and responsibilities. Each category may contribute to experiences of oppression

or privilege. Some may be pressurised to stay in abusive and unhealthy relationships for the sake of the family honour and avoid shame. Other factors such as ethnicity, nationality, geographical location, language and migrant status must be considered in order to have a full picture of the individual. This framework places greater emphasis on the variations within groups (intracategorical) rather than on the variations between groups (intercategorical) (Lockhart and Mitchell, 2010). Berger and Guidroz (2010) advocate moving beyond intersectionality to forge radical interconnectivity and remind us to consider the implications of any research and policies, and whether they contribute to the perpetuation of any interconnected systems of oppression and privilege.

An interesting case study is the long and protracted struggle to allow women to become priests in the Church of England. The General Synod approved the ordination of women in November 1992 and this was followed by their ordination in March 1994 (BBC News, 2012). Women now make up approximately one third of the Church of England's' clergy (Engel, 2014). A report was commissioned to consider the role and place of women in the episcopate and whether women could become bishops (Rochester, 2004). Although women could offer ministry, their career progression and opportunities were limited. On 17 November 2014, the General Synod enacted the measure to allow women to be ordained as bishops in the Church of England. This has led to debate and division within Evangelical and Anglican-Catholics who oppose the ordination of women on traditionalist

grounds citing the teachings of the Bible that require male headship in the church (BBC News, 2014).

The growing number of women clergy has posed questions about whether they will have a transformative effect on clergy norms and practice as well as on religious doctrine policy and practice (Nesbitt, 1997: 585). One question concerns whether women are being granted access to positions of religious leadership sufficient to change religious organisational traditions and practices or whether their presence fills the shortfall in the numbers of clergy and grants female presence but limits their power and influence. Nesbitt's analysis considered the potential of women to achieve leadership positions and effect change and was written before the Anglican Church senate voted to allow the ordination of women bishops but many of the arguments remain.

Sullins (2000) found that a number of research studies have begun to examine the impact of women's ordination. One interesting finding was the resistance by congregations towards change rather than as one might expect from other members of the church hierarchy or other clergy. Recent research has focused on the disparity between formal acceptance and the actual status of women priests in those denominations that have begun ordaining women. There is evidence to suggest that male/female inequality among the clergy is a result of embedded cultural values which have not shown much change over time (Claves, 1997: 259, Lee, 2004)

Gendered discourses serve to hamper the full participation and influence of women in this case as bishops. Intersectionality can help to provide a new understanding about how particular identities are tied to particular inequalities in different historical times and geographic places (McKittirick, 2006).Whilst recognising that identity is multiple and complex, caution must be taken not to separate out and categorise these aspects into discrete and pure strands. Mirza (2013:4). states “intersectionality refers to the converging and conterminous ways in which the differentiated and variable organizing logics of race, class and gender and other social divisions such as sexuality, age, disability, ethnicity, culture, religion and belief structure the material conditions which produce economic, social and political inequality in women's real lived lives”.

Therefore, this should not just be a debate about the relationships between each category as an additive process but also about the constitutive process and its effects (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 195).Social divisions exist in the ways that people experience inclusion and exclusion, discrimination and disadvantage, aspirations and identities in their daily lives (page 198).Individuals need to reflect on their own sense of self, of being and becoming in order to identify their attitudes and prejudices towards others. In terms of women bishops, research would be useful to identify how religious identity is enacted and experienced through women’s sense of self in terms of their power and disempowerment. This would provide an opportunity to examine taken for granted assumptions whilst analysing social relations of power that lead to oppressive conditions and situations and ostensibly could contribute to the

modernisation of church structures and challenges to hegemonic leadership that institutionalises men as the 'natural' voice and instrument of God.

Another example where intersectionality is relevant concerns ethnicity and religion. Following 9/11 and subsequent events in London in July 2005, there has been widespread condemnation of those responsible for the attacks from all quarters, including religious groups as well as the wider public. Since then, there has been a tendency for the media to report the religious affiliation of certain individuals, and in particular when they are Muslim, but not treat others in this way. This has led to a heightened and distorted perception for example about the likelihood of Muslims to commit terrorism. It also reinforces Islam as a one-dimensional and monolithic religion that poses a threat to western democratic values (Ansari, 2002).

For some, religion can be the first and foremost defining feature of their identity whilst for others it may be less important. Intersectionality can assist researchers to acknowledge the complexities of identity in their investigation of how culture impacts and influences choices, actions and behaviour on a daily basis and give voice to oppressed or invisible groups (Vervliet *et al*., 2013).

2.6 Anti-racism and multiculturalism

Social work education and training in the 1980s was at the vanguard of anti-racism in social work. The regulatory body, at that time, the Central Council

for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) publicly acknowledged the endemic nature of racism in British society and required all those training for the professional award, at that time the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) to "*recognise, understand and confront racism and other forms of discrimination and to demonstrate their ability to work effectively in a multi-racial society*" (CCETSW, 1989). This progressive policy initiative not only placed expectations on students to act to address racism but also on approved programmes to teach and assess students on the skills and knowledge required to achieve this (CCETSW, 1991a).In order to assist educators, CCETSW produced a series of training packs and resources to stimulate debate about race and anti-racism (CCETSW, 1991b; Penketh, 2000). However, this commitment was short lived as there was opposition from politicians and pressure placed on CCETSW leading to a revised paper published in 1995 that made no explicit reference to race and anti-racism (Walker, 2002; McLaughlin, 2005).

Penketh (2000) carried out research to elicit how far CCETSW's anti-racist agenda was achieved and to identify any factors that helped or hindered its advancement. A number of fundamental problems were identified; one being that a radical approach was being advocated in that racism could only be addressed by changing the social structures and social relations that perpetuated inequalities. However, social work was and remains an agent of the state with statutory obligations of care and control functions. This paradox serves to undermine any serious commitment to challenge and address inequalities by social workers.

Although, most social work programmes would subscribe to the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) statement that social work is *"a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being*". Neoliberal ideas have led to social workers being placed under increasing pressure to meet targets within a managerialist agenda (Penna and O'Brien, 2009) and the focus of the social work intervention taking an individualist liberal approach rather than a radical approach that recognises and addresses social factors that have contributed to the situation (Gilligan, 2006). Along with the advent of anti-oppressive practice and the state's commitment to address discrimination, this has allowed the state to reposition itself as protector and guardian rather than culpable in any way (McLaughlin, 2005). This is reinforced further by Government policies and the media that vilify those who do not conform, comply or are seen to be a failing to act as responsible citizens in terms of parenting, seeking employment or leading a healthy lifestyle (Jordan, 2001).

In the light of all of these policy and organisational changes and increasing workforce demands on social workers, the Furness/Gilligan framework reminds social workers to hold onto key principles that respect, value and recognise the rights of people at critical times in their lives to culturally appropriate services and support. A greater appreciation and familiarity with

religion and related beliefs can assist social workers to become more confident in challenging discriminatory and oppressive practices.

There have been a number of important theories that have been put forward about how racism is constructed and played out in everyday life. Following post war migration to Britain, racism was attributed to class exploitation and social relations of production (Brown, 1984; Miles, 1987). Assimilation policies were based on the belief of cultural and racial superiority of the majority white society and that 'black' groups should adopt British traditions and integrate by learning new customs and ways of behaving in order to be accepted by the indigenous population (Gerrish *et al*, 1996; Penketh, 2000). 'Black' became used as a political term to recognise that all those identifying as belonging to an ethnic minority group experience racism. This term includes all people of colour, including people of South Asian heritage. However, given the experience of Muslim communities, particularly after the Rushdie affair, Modood (1994) argued that this concept was inherently essentialist and no longer viable.

Assimilation policies failed to appreciate the social psychology and resilience of minority groups facing marginalisation and hostility (Tajfel, 1978; Husband, 1982). This approach also assumed that the host community would welcome new arrivals but the opposite was often the case where migrants were often viewed with suspicion and resentment. The continuing racist exclusion of minority ethnic people was a fundamental contradiction within the attempted politics of assimilation in Britain.

In the 1980s, new explanations of racism were developed that took into account other aspects of identity such as gender and class (Dominelli, 1988). Black perspectives played an important contribution by giving a voice and credibility to the experiences of black people in a similar way to that of feminist and disabled writers (Rowbottom, 1973; 1992, Oliver, 1990). Minority community mobilisation and the growth of critical 'race relations' research contributed to making more salient the existence and processes of racist discrimination in Britain; whilst at the same time governments produced a policy of developing parallel policies of anti-discriminatory legislation and pursued ever more draconian immigration legislation (Husband, 2004).

Race relations legislation was introduced to tackle discrimination and unfair treatment of 'black' immigrants and it was assumed that anti-discriminatory legislation would end discriminatory acts; particularly in employment. However, legislation alone failed to tackle the deep seated roots of prejudice based on perceived differences. Particularly, as elsewhere in mainstream British politics parties vied for the racist and xenophobic populist vote by competing with increasing florid anti-immigrant discourses.

In the 1990s, greater consideration was given to the construction of racial identities and the role of the media in shaping racial identities and discourse (Cohen,1992). This led to a recognition that race was fluid, complex and historically specific (Gilroy, 1990; Goldberg, 1993). Other important

observations were that racism evolved and became more subtle, providing a racist effect whilst denying that racism was the cause (Mellor et al., 2001; Solomos and Back, 2001). Whilst society condemns racism, white people are capable of consciously and unconsciously employing a racist framework to interpret their social world. In an attempt to provide new insights into white superiority and privilege, the concept of 'whiteness' emerged and was a novel way to further reveal the reproduction of dominant power. Frankenberg (1993:1) stated

"*First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint', a place from which white people look at themselves, at others, and at society. Third, whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed*".

Dyer (1997) observed that until white people were identified and seen as a race then race privilege would not be tackled and whiteness would remain the norm with an expectation that others have to conform and measure up to white, ethnocentric standards. Along with other theoretical insights into the construction of 'the other' the concept of whiteness powerfully revealed the complexly subtle embedding of ideologies of oppression in the routines of banal life.

It is important to acknowledge that the constructs of race and ethnicity have their origins in colonialisation and capitalist expansion when Europeans first came into contact with others of different physical appearance, customs and

social organisation (Mason, 2006). Notions of the 'other' as less superior have become embedded into white (un)consciousness and led to biological categorisations and assumptions that distinct physical markers and characteristics are innate to certain groups (Pilkington, 2003). These beliefs have become accepted, routinised and institutionalised within our social systems, encounters and practices (Vodanovich,2007). It is the permeation of such beliefs and values into the taken-for-granted world view of British social workers that provides one of the fundamental challenges to the changes advocated in the Furness/Gilligan framework.

Multiculturalism is a philosophy that aims to celebrate diversity by recognising the social and economic benefits arising from ethnic, cultural, racial and religious groups (Sundar, 2009). Multicultural perspectives are based on an integrationist framework that assumes that learning about and contact with others will reduce prejudice and discrimination. Too often, it ignores the fact that cultures are ranked and reflects white views of black culture as 'traditional, homogeneous, static and exotic' (Ahmed, 1991:168). It has also led to a focus on culture as opposed to race. Husband (2010) provides an analysis of the counter-narratives that have become accepted wisdom in terms of discrediting multiculturalism. These include disquiet about equality legislation that plays to the victimization of the majority discourse portraying them as the losers and disguises the tolerance agenda as benign. Such discourses fail to acknowledge the changing hybrid identities of those living in Britain today and stores up potential inter and intra-racial and cultural conflict.

Lentin (2005) argues that denying the existence of racism could result in three unintended consequences. Firstly, prioritizing culture, religious or ethno racial identity reinforces binary notions of identity and fails to acknowledge multiple identities. This view is starkly illustrated by Blair when he stated that people's rights to practise their religion and culture should be maintained but only in the context of a broader 'duty to integrate'. He argued that "*no distinctive cultural or religious tradition superseded the responsibility to endorse common values, belief in democracy, rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for country and shared heritage*" that he defined as Britishness and this should trump cultural diversity thus revealing his narrow interpretation of identity (Wetherell, 2008:302). Secondly, a focus on the minority can lead to 'victim-blaming' and makes invisible the underlying racist beliefs and practices of the majority. Thirdly, a failure to recognise and address racism may discourage and disempower those affected by racism. Although multiculturalism presents a positive, solution-based perspective it may fail to recognize social and individual critique of underlying and often covert racism at all levels, and hence serve to reproduce its power. Therefore, anti-racism policies need to not only consider community and organizational change but also "*provide a critical reflective lens on institutional practices and policies, which educate, demythologize and, importantly, do not relegate anti-racism to a predominately complaints-based legal framework*" (Berman and Paradies, 2010: 227). This would provide a politically aware framework for the development of initiatives framed by the Furness/Gilligan framework.

In 2010, a new body, the Equality and Human Rights Commission was formed to take responsibility for protecting the rights of all identifying with one or more protected characteristics, including for the first time religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to protect the rights of those in employment and users of public services. However, equality legislation has led to questions about whether we all have the same rights, or whether we all have the right to be different? And, if we have the right to be different, how do we transform differences between groups into a 'politics of difference'? Competing rights of individuals and groups have led to legal challenge that have been addressed and resolved through rulings made by the European Court of Human Rights.

Kymlicka and Norman (2000: 18-19) provide a useful typology that recognises different types of groups present within nation states. In the UK context, and relevant to this thesis, are immigrant groups who have citizenship rights or rights to become citizens, those without rights ('metics') and refugees. In addition, there are religious groups that are non-isolationist in that members of these communities may share the same ethnocultural background or citizenship identity as the majority and wish to participate in civic life but may protect themselves and their children by claiming rights or exemptions from certain cultural practices (page 23). Exemptions may be claimed from laws that penalize or burden cultural practices (for example, exemption from certain classes in public schools); affirmative action policies as in the case of public funding for religious schools; internal rules and

sanctions when members do not comply or conform to expectations about their behaviour and the incorporation and enforcement of traditional or religious codes in the legal system (for example, sharia law) (Levy, 1997 cited in Kymlicka and Norman, 2000:25 -30). In order to accommodate minority rights and any competing claims there needs to be a careful examination of specific contexts and consideration as to whether this would affect liberal principles embodied within individual freedoms, social equality and democracy (page 2).

New types of cultural racism are becoming apparent, often based on the construction of fixed religious and cultural boundaries (Solomos, 2003: 251). There are contradictions in social policy that seek to curtail immigration and limit the numbers of asylum seekers whilst seeking to challenge inequality of opportunity. Recent moral panics about the numbers of possible Romanian economic migrants wishing to work in Britain following their entry into the EU is racist but accepted as a reasonable policy to protect the interests of British citizens. The scapegoating of groups perceived as 'other' and as a threat to employment opportunities, claiming welfare benefits without contributing to the state are cited as legitimate frustrations to act out prejudice and racism and blame others for troubles at home. The government's policy on minorities is now framed in terms of a return to the period of colour-blind assimilation (where racial characteristics are ignored in welfare policy-making and practice), which characterized 'race' relations policy in the 1950s and early 1960s (Craig, 2013: 718). Craig observes that in the government's view, the drive for equality has gone too far and racial inequalities are a thing

of the past. This is ironic as racial inequalities are deepening at a time when the dimension of ‘race’ is becoming regarded as irrelevant.

The following chapters include an overview of each publication in terms of theoretical insights, substantive findings and practice /policy implications.

Chapter 3 Religion, beliefs and cross-cultural social work practice

Until the 1990s, there was very little quantitative research which provided demographic information about those affiliated to the major faith communities or about the influence of religion on social attitudes or life experiences (O'Beirne, 2004). As part of the literature review for my first article (Art. 1), I report on an analysis of data collected by Modood *et al.,* (1997) on the importance of religion amongst white and ethnic minority groups as part of the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities. In this report, they consider the impact of British socialisation on religious observance and the length of residence in Britain. An interesting finding was the developing difference between first and second generation Punjabi Sikhs and Gujerati Hindus in the levels of participation in faith activities. However, in comparison Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims continued to place religion central in their lives. Some Muslim respondents identified tensions between religious teaching and actual behaviours. At that time, few social work publications recognised differences between people of South Asian origin and certainly religious affiliation was overlooked within social work literature. Policy makers need to take into account demographic changes and the locality of those identifying with a religion or not in terms of planning, development and service delivery. It is important to recognise the diversity of those identifying with a particular religion/ethnicity including White British people rather than singling out those

who appear to be different or ‘the other’ as this leads to division and potential conflict when treated differently or as a special case.

In 2001, the Census, for the first time, invited respondents to comment about religious affiliation. At that time, a large majority of the population, 71.6% as opposed to 59.3% in Census 2011 data, indicated that they were Christian, but this revealed little about their beliefs or practices. For those people identifying with one of the other major faiths, there were 2.7% Muslim (increased to 4.8% in 2011), 1% Hindu (increased to 1.5% in 2011), 0.6% Sikh (increased to 0.8% in 2011), 0.5% Jewish (same in 2011), 0.3% Buddhist (increased to 0.4% in 2011), 0.3% other religion and 15.5 % No religion (Weller, 2004; ONS, 2012). At that time, there was a decline in church attendance and indications from the survey that increasing numbers of the British population did not identify with the majority religion, Christianity (Brierley, 2000, 2005; Bruce, 2002; Crockett and Voas, 2006), this fed a view that Britain was experiencing a process of secularisation whereby religious thinking and practice was losing its significance and influence (Davie, 2007: Macey and Carling, 2011). Across Europe, concerns have been expressed about a loss of Christian faith and scholars have investigated the possible reasons for this. There is a need to develop new measures of religiosity as church attendance in the Christian tradition as an indicator of religiosity is less relevant to some parts of the population and not appropriate to other major faiths. There needs to be a greater appreciation and recognition of the diverse and changing nature of religious affiliation and expression.

In 2004, O'Beirne indicates in her report that religious affiliation and ethnicity is closely related and therefore social policy and research should take both factors into account rather than treat them separately. In fact, there appears to be a tendency to ignore religion all together (Sultana and Sheikh, 2008). In many studies, religion as a facet of identity and diversity was not taken into account; perhaps on the premise that this was a private matter, was not significant or too difficult to make any meaningful comparison in the absence of reliable measures (Aspinall, 2007). There may have been an assumption by researchers that Christianity was the dominant religion and this may have contributed to an unconscious decision to overlook religion as a category in its own right. Although policy makers and academics now recognise that religion is just one facet of identity and that people have multiple identities that are interdependent on circumstance and place, as indicated this was not always the case (Mitchell, 2006). Whether for research or monitoring purposes, ethnicity along with age and gender were the variables that were routinely selected as a basis for comparison and analysis. Those belonging to any of the other major faiths tended to be subsumed within race and ethnicity. This seemed a serious omission and I set out to consider the significance and importance of religion and related belief among social work students.

As a social work lecturer, I have regular contact with students and used an opportunity sample (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) to investigate their views about the impact of religion and belief on practice (Art. 1). A mixed method approach was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A

questionnaire was used to find out the importance of their religious belief, if any. In this sample, younger students valued their religion and the possible reasons for this need more investigation. It also asked them to provide examples of any conflicts or ethical dilemmas concerning religious beliefs and practice and to suggest ways of preparing and equipping social workers to work with diverse faiths and communities. Students had anxieties about experiencing racism on placement. Although, the 1980s had witnessed a serious commitment to recognise and combat racism, anti-racist policies and action have dropped off the political agenda. Findings from an annual British Social Attitudes survey (BSA) based on interviews with 3,300 people found higher levels of racial prejudice than previous years (BSA, 2014). This survey provides little detail about the respondents and the nature of their prejudices and there needs to be further study to make this more meaningful. As educators we have a responsibility to ensure that our learning environments foster tolerance and respect. We can do this by addressing any allegations of discrimination and asking students about their experiences in the classroom or in practice settings. Our teaching should assist students to develop the knowledge to understand the wider context of racism, how it is reproduced within the public sphere and how this impacts on the experiences of service users.

Training social workers need to develop cultural sensitivity and awareness to practise effectively in a plural society and this should be emulated by educators in their dealings with students, colleagues and service users. In order to achieve this, there needs to be better preparation of placement

providers about cultural practices for example, the significance of Asian female students wearing hijab, fasting, dietary needs, providing a room for prayer. Social work programmes should place greater emphasis on covering religion in the curriculum by providing information about each of the major faiths, inviting speakers to talk about their faith, displaying positive images about religion and providing opportunities to share views (Art. 1). Social work educators should prepare students to work with all service user groups including those sharing similar characteristics whether of a similar ethnic background, gender or class.

The main finding in this study was that religion and spirituality was a neglected area of social work and there was a need for further research to promote culturally appropriate and competent practice (Art. 1). This study attempted to measure the extent of students' religious beliefs by using a likert scale and some consideration was given to other social divisions such as gender, ethnic origin and age. I was interested in finding out whether there were any links between students' religious affiliations and their motivations to train as social workers. In order to do this, I conducted a longitudinal study over four years to find out students' views about the social work bursary and collected data about their religious affiliation (Furness, 2007). The findings were inconclusive to determine whether religion was significant in terms of career choice and motivation. I have observed that increasing numbers of students identify with a religion and are attracted to social work as their personal and religious values align with social work values. This is an area that deserves further exploration. In that study, I was

able to compare some characteristics of students with national recruitment data collected by the General Social Care Council (GSCC). It is important that there is continued monitoring and data collection of pre-registration social work students in terms of their gender, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation in order to determine whether the workforce is representative of the population it serves and to investigate whether religious affiliation is significant and if so, whether personal values arising from religious beliefs are compatible with social work values.

The locality of the study was important as Bradford has a significant Muslim population that is diverse in terms of factors such as language, education, place of origin, local geographical location, gender, leadership and allegiance to homeland that all contribute to shaping individual and group identities and their collective actions and behaviours (Lewis, 2002). Other studies and reports have also acknowledged the significance of locality when investigating religious affiliation and settlement patterns (Ballard, 1994; Simpson, 2005; Peach, 2006).

Carrying out the literature review for the study introduced me to the term cultural competence and I became interested in the notion of teaching 'cultural competence' as one way to assist students to develop a greater awareness of self and a wider appreciation of how they might engage with others in their work. I was influenced by the work of a number of authors including Campinha-Bacote,1994; Henley and Schott, 1999; Purnell and

Paulanka, 2003; Husband and Torry, 2004; Sue, 2006 and Papadopoulos, 2006.

Along with other colleagues interested in this concept, I organised a one day conference entitled ‘Shifting Sands: Developing cultural competence’ in 2004. I presented a paper that was later published (Art. 2). This paper was based on the evaluation of teaching materials and training resources suggested by Mama (2001) and Hogan-Garcia (2003). As a way of introducing students to the notion of cultural competence, the educational model suggested by Mama (2001, 374–75) was used as a framework.

The three elements included:

1. facilitating an awareness, understanding and acceptance of one’s own culture in relationship to the culture of others
2. gaining a knowledge and appreciation of other cultures
3. recognizing diversity as normative.

Hogan-Garcia’s (2003) training model was based on a continuous process of self-reflection and translation into behaviours that are respectful of others. The training model consists of two broadly independent components, one’s cultural knowledge and one’s actions and skills, which include both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Components are multi-level and flow between the personal, interpersonal and organisational levels. In order to develop cultural competence, one has actively to engage with the process of

self-reflection, have a desire and willingness to change or gain knowledge to work with others and continually practise and develop these new skills. In my article, I suggest that “the challenge for social workers and other health and social care professionals is to develop a greater awareness and understanding of self-identity and its impact on our ability to engage and work more effectively and positively with others” (Art. 2: 248). In order to do this it is necessary that “professionals develop transferable and reflective skills to work with difference and similarities in culture, background and experience and to change their behaviour, beliefs and attitudes accordingly, as part of a continual learning process” (page 248). Professionals need to practise being open and less fearful of others in order to understand others’ values and priorities that arise from religious and cultural expectations. In order to acquire the necessary skills to work across and within cultures, it is important that students and practitioners develop a historical understanding of how the state has responded to migration and changing demography in its social and economic policies and how this has shaped health and social care provision.

Under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990, it was recognised by policy makers that services should be needs led rather than service led. However, neo-liberal policies and the rolling back of the welfare state has meant that in the UK, the dominant welfare service model is about fitting people into existing resources rather than developing alternative and more appropriate services tailored to their specific assessed needs. This ‘one size’ fits all approach fails to meet the needs of its diverse population,

leads to a low take up of services by certain groups and differential or inappropriate treatment based on normative behaviour and western models of welfare services (Barn, 1993; Fernando, 1995; 2002). Graham (2002) advocates a shift away from dominant western helping approaches based on universalist paradigms and to utilise culturally specific, in this case, African helping processes defined by solidarity, mutuality, collective responsibility, spirituality and reciprocity. Graham's paper recognises the place of black histories and cultural oppression that negates "the experiences, values, ideas and interpretations of marginalized groups about the causes and resolutions of social problems" (2002: 43). New models of welfare need to be developed in partnership with communities that strengthen community development and bring about racial equality, social justice and social change.

Chapter 4 Social work education and training

As well as carrying out independent work, from 2003 I collaborated with my colleague, Philip Gilligan who shared similar research interests in relation to religion and belief. Our first joint study (Art. 3) was based in part on the questionnaire developed by Sheridan and Amato-von Hemert (1999). Some questions were changed or omitted to make the questionnaire more culturally appropriate for Britain and we included qualified social workers as well as students in the sample. Findings from the survey of qualified social work practitioners and students indicated a need for social work education and practice to focus attention both on the importance of religious and spiritual beliefs in the lives of many service users and on the potential usefulness of religious and spiritual interventions. This was one of the first published studies to identify this (Furman *et al*., 2004; Art. 3). This article and subsequent publications have been cited by others and has established our academic credibility as leaders in this field.

One finding was that students were less likely than their qualified colleagues to consider religious or spiritually sensitive interventions as appropriate. Attitudes varied little between those students who held religious beliefs and those who did not, but Muslim students and qualified social workers were more likely to view these types of interventions as appropriate. 64% Muslim students thought it appropriate to share their own religious /spiritual views compared to 27% Christian and 36% with no religious beliefs. Of concern was that at least one student expressed an unwillingness to consider

religious and spiritual interventions. High numbers of respondents were disapproving of certain acts, for example performing exorcisms, touching a client for healing purposes and recommending religious forgiveness, penance or amends. One explanation for this is that these types of interventions are not seen as appropriate to a British social work context. However, changes to the demographics of the social work workforce indicate higher numbers of training and qualifying social workers from Africa and other parts of the world where belief in spiritual possession and spiritual cleansing is more accepted. Students need to be given opportunities to explore their own beliefs along with the significance of religious and spiritual beliefs in the lives of others as part of their training. In our study, we asked students whether religion and spirituality should be taught as part of the curriculum and if so, how best to include this. 75% of this sample was in support of a specialized course in religion and spirituality as part of their training; whilst 28% suggested this to be compulsory and 46% for this to be an elective. 65% favoured inclusion of this topic in the social work curriculum (Art. 3).

There is a clear need for all social work practitioners and educators to give greater priority to exploring the potential significance of religious and spiritual beliefs in their training, in their professional practice and in the lives and perspectives of service users and colleagues (Art. 3). This finding was shared by colleagues in the US (Sheridan *et al*., 1994; Canda, 1998; Canda and Furman 1999; Canda *et al*., 2004), but ways to achieve this were less clear. There is a need for a more informed understanding of religious

differences, both within and across different faiths, and ethnic influences to inform ‘spiritually competent’ social work. Further research can be carried out by building on this data and using other methods of data collection (focus groups and semi-structured interviews) to provide deeper explanations of students’, practitioners; and service users’ views about the role of religion and spirituality in their lives and practice.

In the British context, as part of a series of publications to promote equal opportunities and anti-racism in social work, Patel *et al*. (1998) argued for a more informed understanding of religious differences and ethnic influences to better prepare social workers for a plural society and the need for a framework to assist them to engage with matters of religion and belief. Our book, *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making A Difference’* was to fill that gap (Art. 8).

We submitted the book proposal in June 2006 to Policy Press and the book was published in 2010. At the outset, we agreed to take the lead on specific chapters. I have sole authorship of chapters 5, 7 and 8 and joint authorship of chapters 1, 3, 6, 11 and the appendix.

The book had three major objectives. Firstly, to outline the general relevance and impact of religion and related belief on the users and practitioners of social work in the UK; secondly, to explore questions and research concerned with the extent to which social work (in its practices, policies and professional training) takes account of such beliefs and finally, to consider

specific issues, settings, communities and stages in the life course of individuals where issues of religion and spiritual belief may be of particular significance. In my search for relevant literature to aid writing of three chapters relating to older people, people with learning disabilities and those with mental health issues, I found that more attention had been given to specific areas of practice. Literature exists to aid understanding and meaning making about loss, death and bereavement that I refer to in chapter five (Neimeyer and Anderson, 2002; Holloway, 2007b; Weinstein, 2008) and in mental health in chapter seven (Fernando, 1995, 2002; Loewenthal 1995, 2006). There is scope to carry out new research to understand how religion and related beliefs can be a source of support as well as harm and distress. In terms of older people, religion and spirituality can assist people to make transitions, as forms of healing and to deal with death and dying. Western healing has tended to ignore or discredit alternative forms of healing but there is scope to investigate the place of family and community, and religious, spiritual beliefs and traditions for service users of different faiths in order to find new ways of assisting those in need to deal with ill health, distress and other difficulties or crises. The religious and spiritual needs of people with learning disabilities tend to be overlooked and parents have different expectations of their children in terms of having the ability to worship and their understanding of religious texts. There was some evidence that people with a learning disability have been forced into marriage and since then multi-agency practice guidelines have been written (Forced Marriage Unit, 2010). It would be useful to conduct research into the reasons why this is occurring and investigate whether there are any links to religious or

cultural factors at work here. There is a body of evidence and interest in the relevance of religion and spirituality and their association with positive mental health outcomes. Koenig *et al*'s (2001:135) review of relevant research concerned with religion and depression identified that some aspects of religious involvement are associated with lower levels of depression and can help people to cope with stressful life events. An important observation, is that religious affiliation in itself is not a barrier to accessing mental health services, but it is necessary for mental health professionals to develop cultural and religious literacy to aid recovery by drawing on peoples' belief systems and to build a sense of resilience (Mental Health Foundation, 2007: Campbell *et al*., 2008).

A particular strength of the book was that it was based on real life case studies that showed how religion can be both a source of harm and good in peoples' lives. As part of our preparation and research, we conducted semi-structured interviews with social work practitioners working in different fields using snowball sampling (Sarantakos, 2005: 165). The respondents were sent the outline of the interview so that they could prepare for the interview by identifying examples where there have been issues arising from religious background and belief. In particular, if there had been dilemmas for the workers, how they responded to the issues, the needs of the person involved, if they sought advice and if so, what were the sources of advice. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and we selected relevant case material that exemplified how social workers had taken into account the religious and spiritual beliefs and needs of service users when carrying out

assessments and interventions. Those case examples were anonymised and we contacted each practitioner to ask them to confirm the accuracy of the transcript and for permission to publish each example in the book. Practitioners appeared very open and frank in their discussion of cases and clearly had to grapple with complex ethical challenges, dilemmas and issues in their work. Most case studies were summarised and there were some direct quotations included from respondents to illustrate particular points. From the interviews, we were able to reflect on the data and identify some key themes and principles that were common and shared by many of the respondents in their discussion of cases. These principles informed the Furness/Gilligan framework that was designed to be applied at all stages of assessment, planning intervention and evaluation and broadly followed person-centred and strengths-based approaches (Rogers, 2003; Saleeby, 2008). The nature of a genuine and respectful relationship is a fundamental principle of our framework and based on existing counselling and social work literature that identifies the importance of listening, developing self-awareness and reflexivity about religious and spiritual beliefs in order to work in an empowering way (Fook, 2002; Banks, 2006;Payne and Askeland, 2008). As a follow-up piece of work, students were asked to apply the framework to a piece of work where religion or another set of beliefs was relevant and their feedback assisted us to refine the framework.

The book has been well received by several of my peers working in this field and who reviewed the book (Whiting, 2010; Hodge, 2012; Moss, 2012).

Moss (2012: 216) wrote "*The authors' strong research background informs this whole book, demonstrating how sound research can inform and enhance competent practice. The references following each chapter are comprehensive and provide much scope for further study. The book provides a wide range of challenging scenarios/case study material that trigger important discussion, not least in helping to identify ways in which religion and belief can be for some people liberating while for others discriminatory and oppressive".*

Hodge (2012:128) stated the "*Furness/Gilligan framework for assessing the significance of religion in assessment, intervention, and evaluation is well conceptualized and readily applied in practice settings. In an innovative turn in social work discourse, the authors define religion broadly as encompassing both religious and spiritual beliefs that impact clients' understandings, regardless of whether these understandings are expressed in more traditional forms, such as Catholicism, or more alternative forms, such as the New Age or goddess spirituality movements"*.

The framework is made up of eight interconnecting principles that practitioners should take into account in their encounters with service users and carers. The principles can be reframed as questions or prompts for reflection. Central to the encounter is the recognition of the strengths, needs, views, beliefs and experiences of the service user and acknowledgement of their expertise about their own needs and beliefs. The practitioner works to develop a relationship based on genuine interest and concern, trust, respect

and a willingness to engage by listening to the individual, by being open and responsive, to review and revise any plans in creative ways. The practitioner needs to seek out opportunities to discuss religious and spiritual beliefs and any strengths, needs or difficulties that arise from them with others. Where necessary, practitioners can seek relevant information and advice about unfamiliar religious and spiritual practices and also need to be self-aware and reflexive about their own religious and spiritual beliefs and their responses to others (Art. 4 and Art.8).

In terms of gathering evidence to promote the framework the next stage was to test out the framework and find evidence of its usefulness (or not) in practice situations. The framework has been presented in different settings and to different audiences at conferences, seminars and workshops with qualified social workers and students. Early feedback was collected from MA Social Work students at the University of Bradford (Art. 4) within a day workshop. Students were invited to complete a questionnaire to identify a specific piece of work where 'religion' or another set of beliefs was, or could have been, a factor that was taken into account; respond to questions in relation to the social work carried out with a specific service user and provide feedback on this process. In the article, we acknowledge the limitations in terms of the nature and size of the sample and the single geographical locality. However, the respondents provided illustrative material, and in our view, further justification for use of the framework.

A key finding based on analysis of data collected from student social workers was their realisation after applying the framework that they are likely to make assumptions based on ethnicity and appearance and their own belief systems (Art. 5). Students with a lack of religious belief started to recognise that this may have contributed to their overlooking the importance of religion and belief in the lives of others as it was not significant for them and they made an assumption that others shared the same world view. Some Asian British Muslim students tended to view others sharing similar characteristics as sharing the same beliefs and white British people as having no strong faith beliefs. Ethnocentrism is a key construct and provides an explanation about using one's own culture as a benchmark to measure and judge others against (Bauman and May, 2001; Law, 2010). The majority of students in this sample stated that they had responded to discussions about religion led by service users and not imposed their religious beliefs (if they had any) on others. Although, these claims need to be treated with some caution as students may not wish to admit this or not recognise any omission. Fears about raising matters of religion with others may be due to ignorance and lack of knowledge; not being able to differentiate between religious and cultural practices; offending or upsetting people and a lack of confidence or skill. Underestimating or ignoring the place of religion and belief can result in the loss of opportunities to make real differences and improvements in the lives of service users, while inaction could on occasion lead to serious harm. This was certainly central in the case of Victoria Climbie[1] who died in 2000,

[1] In 2000, eight year old Victoria Climbie, who came to Europe from Ghana to stay with her aunt and partner, died from hypothermia after suffering months of neglect and torture at their hands.

and in another case where Kristy Bamu[2].was tortured and murdered in 2010. Both cases highlight the need for action to recognise and deal with cultural beliefs relating to spirit possession and witchcraft (Laming, 2003; Briggs et al, 2011; The National Working Group on Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief, 2012). Recently, the work was acknowledged as a source of evidence for a review that considered the current knowledge of research into child abuse linked to faith or belief, spirit possession and witchcraft (Simon et al., 2012). The authors highlighted the dearth of literature in this area and one key recommendation cited our work "*Further research is needed to explore the attitudes and responses of child protection professionals in relation to religion and child abuse, in order for practitioners to take account of the religion and beliefs of those they are working with (see Art. 3)*".

In order to seek wider feedback about the usefulness of the framework, questionnaires were circulated to social work students studying at four universities in northern England and the English midlands. The questionnaires surveyed students' views about the extent to which issues of religion and belief had been discussed in practice settings over a twelve-month period and to elicit what they thought had encouraged and discouraged this. A range of factors are identified that either encourage or discourage them from considering or exploring religion and belief in their work, in relation to the attitudes of colleagues and service users, themselves

[2] In 2010, Kristy Bamu's sister and partner believed that 15 year old Kristy was a witch and subjected him to sustained beatings and a ritual cleansing that finally resulted in his death.

and their agencies. Their responses suggest that individual perspectives on and experiences of religion together with the informal views of colleagues determine whether and how religion and belief are acknowledged as significant and relevant. Students reported that few agencies promoted any opportunity for staff development and training in respect of this area, perhaps because issues of religion and belief are not considered important, significant or relevant or are given less priority amongst other pressing issues and responsibilities. Employers must comply with equality legislation, but the experiences of respondents suggest that social work and similar agencies need to become much more proactive in offering training and preparing staff to engage with matters of faith (Art. 5).

Another key finding was that over one-third of those who described religion as not being an important part of their lives described religion as being important in their work. Those students were able to appreciate the relevance of religion to social work practice. At the same time, while the majority of students for whom religion was important also acknowledged its relevance in their work, one-third described it as not being important in that context. This group appeared to separate out personal religious belief from their practice. Recognising contradictions between intentions and actions is important and more qualitative data is necessary to make further comment about these differences. One implication is that, while the religious beliefs of service users seem more likely to be taken into account when religion matters to workers, in a broader context, there will be considerable variation between the attitudes of individual workers. These often arise from a wide

variety of factors, beyond the issue of whether religion plays a role in their personal lives.

Although legislation recognises the right to religious freedom, this raises questions about whether the policies of faith-based organisations' or individual rights to 'conscientious objection' can be upheld (Art. 8: 154). To work effectively with those from different cultures, it is critical to deconstruct dominant cultural biases and develop the ability to see, understand, and articulate the world through the eyes of culturally subordinate worldviews in an empathetic manner. Organisations have a legal responsibility to ensure that people are not treated unfairly on the basis of their religion or non-religious beliefs under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has a responsibility to monitor and take action if organisations or individuals impose their own beliefs or override the beliefs of others in terms of service provision. Social workers are expected to put aside personal preferences and beliefs and work in the best interests of service users. Part of social work education and continuing professional development needs to focus on how to deal with ethical dilemmas and problems arising from religion and belief. The Furness/Gilligan framework makes some contribution to this area of debate; and the research summarized immediately above demonstrates the applied benefits of a cumulative body of research addressed to the issue of the recognition of the relevance of faith in social work practice.

The last publication arose from an invitation to contribute to a special themed edition relating to social policy and religion in contemporary Britain (Art. 6). The article was written to explore the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in welfare provision in the context of a vision of a Big Society being promoted by government as an effective policy to replace state provided services and encourage greater personal responsibility. Austerity measures introduced as a consequence of the banking crisis and ongoing public disquiet about the immorality associated with bankers' rights to bonuses regardless of their performance and incidences where members of parliament have made excessive personal allowance claims fuelled debates about there being a moral vacuum in Britain. There is scope for religious groups to contribute to this debate and to consider their contribution in terms of alternative models of welfare provision. This leads to wider debates that are taking place in Europe and other western countries about the future role of the state, neo-liberal projects that aim to shape and transform welfare services with less reliance on public funding and entitlement and a greater emphasis on individual responsibility (Backstrom *et al*., 2010, 2011).

Chapter 5 Making sense of competing priorities

Routine social work practice includes making ethical and sound judgements and decisions that can be justified and defended. Over recent years, several authors have contributed to resources to aid educators to teach students about the place of values and ethics in social work (Reamer, 2006; Parrott, (2006) 2010; Gray and Webb, 2010; Beckett and Maynard, (2005) 2013; Banks, (1995, 2001, 2006) 2012). My research, teaching and experiential workshops with students to develop their awareness and understanding about religious beliefs heightened my interest concerning potential conflicts between religious and cultural beliefs and social work practice. Since taking up a post as social work lecturer, I have observed the changing student body particularly in terms of their ethnicity and religious affiliation and how this shapes moral and ethical behaviour. My first article (Art. 1) invited students to identify anxieties relating to placement and to provide examples of conflicts or ethical dilemmas concerning religious beliefs and practice. A number of issues remain a challenge a decade on.

One female student who was a Pentecostal/evangelical stated that other professionals had assumed that her faith would adversely affect her work. She gave examples of how abortion and euthanasia were in conflict with her religious beliefs and social work values but that she would accept a person's right to choice and self-determination. This example raises a number of issues. Service users and colleagues may judge another on the basis of their appearance and religious affiliation and wrongly believe that they will hold

certain views. This is starkly reflected in public suspicion about all Muslims resulting from the attacks on the World Trade Centre and London transport bombings and more recent world events (Abrams and Houston, 2007; Shaw, 2012). Students' views about same sex relationships arising from their religious beliefs, but not exclusively, can be contentious. Students are encouraged to share their views in small group exercises, sometimes about sensitive subjects. Last year, when carrying out a workshop with MA social work students it became clear that some students openly disagreed with same sex relationships and this led to debate amongst staff about how to deal with this as well as questioning some students' suitability to train as social workers. Students need to be honest about their beliefs and recognise when these may impact on their relationships with service users. Some students may decide worryingly to deliberately hide the extent of their beliefs whilst others are able to explore the potential impact on their practice. Social work educators should aim to foster a supportive environment that encourages debate and discussion whilst challenging any controversial views, attitudes and language in order to assist students to resolve any personal conflicts and tensions.

Melville-Wiseman (2013) submitted a paper that was presented at a conference that I initiated at the University of Bradford and published in the special edition of *International Social Work on Social Work, Religion and Spirituality* in which I was co-editor (Art. 7). This paper describes a teaching model to resolve a schism between students expressing faith-based view that same sex relationships are sinful and others who believed that those

holding those views should not train as social workers. Students have to demonstrate as part of the assessment of professional practice that they can uphold and maintain social work values. This presents a paradox in terms of upholding social work values and ethical pluralism. There are common challenges facing social workers who have to work with others holding different value positions to their own or that of the profession.

Hinman (2008) questions whether a pluralistic approach to morality can accommodate different value positions. The minimum aim of a plural society is tolerance where different groups are free to follow their own traditions. However, if human rights are breached then this is not acceptable and there must be legal consequences and public debate. The very nature of diverse value systems means that there will be inconsistencies and incompatibility at times. There are dangers of essentialising certain values and assuming that all those identifying with that grouping identify with that shared value. Hugman (2013) suggests a way forward is not to ignore the challenge but to understand and respond with honesty, integrity and respect whilst recognising the messy and unpredictable nature of the problematic. In practice, a starting point is first to engage with the issue and to acknowledge and recognise the different and often competing claims in order to arrive at some compromise or agreement.

In my view, Britain along with other western countries face some serious challenges ahead in terms of the extent to which the state recognises and supports the rights of all of its citizens to make choices and decisions about

how to live their lives. Concerns about the extent of Muslim fundamentalism and radicalisation coupled with fears about increased migration as evidenced by the continual stream of economic migrants from existing and new members of the European Union are fuelled by media reporting about the undermining of British values, negative portrayal of others' motivation for coming to live in Britain and the perception that migrants only wish to take advantage of generous welfare services. All add to growing suspicions and racist views of others as 'strangers' as takers rather than givers with little to contribute to society.

Certainly, for those new to England, religion and religious worship have assisted believers to come together, to support each other and develop networks that will enable them to adapt to living in this country. However, as discussed earlier this process is not about assimilation, acculturation or total absorption. All parties need to be open to change and challenge and at times, the state may have to intervene when certain behaviours and actions lead to harm and are not acceptable in a democratic society. There are a number of fault lines appearing where there are some indications that individuals living in some communities are being pressurised to conform or comply with cultural expectations against their will. Additionally, religious and cultural practices serve to maintain the interests of some over the interests of others. In the interests of promoting and creating a more equal society then careful attention, scrutiny and challenge needs to be given to any practices or traditions that are negatively discriminatory and oppressive.

When Ronan Williams was still Archbishop of Canterbury he created controversy by stating that Shariah law was operating in this country as this was perceived as a direct threat to undermine the British judicial system. Bano (2004, 2012) identifies the place of Shariah councils where personal law operates in the private sphere away from the gaze and influence of state law. Shariah Councils offer advice and guidance about Muslim family law and custom to the Muslim community, offer mediation and reconciliation services, issue Muslim divorce certificates and promote and preserve Islam within British society (Bunt 1998:103 cited in Bano, 2004).Muslim women (and men) may be compelled to comply with these bodies because of family honour (Bano, 2012). Bano (2004) cites McClean, 1997 and Bottomly, 1984 in her review of official family mediation and reveals the dilemma for the liberal state in terms of regulating 'family life' whilst preserving 'family privacy'. Feminists argue that the public/private dichotomy debate serves the interests of men by obscuring power relations and by designating marriage, divorce, sexual behaviour and domestic violence to liberal political discourses of personal choice and freedom and leaving women left with little state protection (Olen 1983: 1503 cited in Bano, 2012). The public/private dichotomy in English law needs to be more explicit in order to determine the limits, recognition and acceptability of religious beliefs and cultural practices in private life Bano (2004: 44) raises two questions, firstly how far is the law committed to multiculturalism and whether the practice of Muslim personal laws lead to unequal treatment of women.

On 13 March 2014 the Law Society, which represents solicitors in England and Wales, issued a practice note with details of how to draft "Sharia compliant" wills. The practice note includes the following:

"The male heirs in most cases receive double the amount inherited by a female heir of the same class. Non-Muslims may not inherit at all, and only Muslim marriages are recognised."

"…illegitimate and adopted children are not Sharia heirs."

Although, practice notes do not change the law, the Law Society is endorsing the distribution of assets in accordance with provisions that discriminate against women, non-Muslims, and 'illegitimate' and adopted children. This guidance contributes to the ongoing legitimisation of discriminatory Sharia law practices as alternatives to egalitarian and secular English and UK laws (Lawyers' Secular Society, 2014). Parekh (2000, 2006) does not support the case for separate legal systems for different communities. He cites case law whereby religious/cultural traditions can be accommodated in private life as long as they do not conflict with liberal legal principles of 'equality before the law' and 'common citizenship'. Clearly, although the recent practice note is not statute, this guidance has credibility and considered good practice for lawyers when dealing with such cases.

Although religion can be a source of strength and comfort for many it is important to investigate how those identifying with different faiths access that support as well as investigate how religion is used to control behaviour and the outcome of that control on the lives of those affected. There is a need for

robust empirical research to carry forward the validity and relevance of the work that I have already conducted as well as new areas of enquiry.

Future research could investigate the religious/spiritual needs of people affiliated to different religions to find out how their faith helps to sustain them and deal with any challenges from their caring responsibilities or crises resulting from life events. Respondents should be given an opportunity to share who they would turn to for support at times of need and crisis in order to identify help seeking and help giving sources. The role played by family and extended family has policy implications in terms of formal support services. A universal westernised approach to helping is not fit for purpose to meet the diverse needs of those living in Britain today. Services need to be more creative, and promote different methods of delivery that take into account traditional helping practices (Kee, 2007). The Institute of Fiscal Studies warns that there will be more cuts to public spending in order to reduce public sectoring borrowing (Marszai, 2014). Current welfare policies mean that public services will be reduced even further with a clear expectation that individuals will have to take greater responsibility to meet their own social care needs. This provides an opportunity for service providers and policy makers to review existing provision and to incorporate alternative ways that are traditionally used to support individuals and families at times of need. A recent report published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) recommended a number of collective solutions to care in an ageing society (McNeil and Hunter, 2014). The authors recognise the role of family and mutual support and called for new neighbourhood networks to

be developed and existing social structures to be adapted to meet the needs of a growing older population. The report refers to case studies taken from Europe, Japan and Australia but if we are to build new structures to accommodate the diverse needs of those living in Britain today and tomorrow, then it is important to import helping approaches from other parts of the world to reflect the diverse lifestyles and traditions. For many people, religion plays a central role in daily living and this should not be overlooked or underestimated and understanding how these beliefs impact or influence decision making and actions has the potential to inform public policy and help to build a stronger and more inclusive society. A pressing and persistent problem is that European social policy tends to essentialize religious identity leading to an overemphasis on difference rather than an expression of multiple identities within specific political and social contexts (Atkin, 2004).

The publications used to inform this thesis make up a substantial element of the British social work literature regarding religion. Although, some attempts were made to interview and record people identifying with a religion about their beliefs and how their beliefs were relevant to accessing social care services, this proved difficult. Any future research needs to take into account the views of service users to inform policy, practice and training resources.

In my view, it is clear that religion and spirituality are key areas to be included in the social work curriculum if training and qualified practitioners are to engage with such matters in any consistent and meaningful way. The

College of Social Work is publishing curriculum guides for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to assist them to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the changing needs of those using social care services. The Higher Education Academy (HEA) also promotes good practice and initiatives to enhance teaching. Both organisations can be instrumental in shaping the future training of social workers by drawing attention to existing resources. There are other social work academics and practitioners who share the view that these areas deserve attention and prominence and this body of knowledge provides a sound basis to continue to research and develop materials and resources in this field.

The research reviewed in this brief overview has been carried out with an aspiration that it may inform current debates about practice and shape future developments. The argument above has recognised the many social and political forces that frame the discourse and politics of diversity in Britain. Social work practitioners may practice within a context of professional expectations, normative beliefs and funding regimens shaped by these forces; but they do have a capacity to create change within their own communities of practice.

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Appendix 1: List of submitted publications

Journal articles

2003

Art. 1: 'Religion, beliefs and culturally competent social work practice', *The Journal of Practice Teaching in Health and Social Work,* **5** (1), 61-74. [R, P, *]

2005

Art. 2: 'Shifting Sands: Developing Cultural Competence', *Practice,* **17** (4), 247-256. [R, P, *]

2006

Art.3: 'The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Practice: views and experiences of social workers and students', *British Journal of Social Work*, **36** (4) 617-637. [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

2010

Art. 4: 'Social Work, Religion and Belief: Developing a Framework for Practice', *British Journal of Social Work*, **40** (7) 2185-2202. [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

2012

Art. 5: ''It never came up': encouragements and discouragements to addressing religion and belief in professional practice. What do social work students have to say?', *British Journal of Social Work, **44** (3), 763-781.* [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

Art. 6: 'Faith-based Organisations and UK Welfare Services: Exploring Some Ongoing Dilemmas', *Social Policy and Society*, **11** (4), 601-612. [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

2013

Art. 7: Editorial: special issue on 'Religion and Spirituality and Social Work', *International Social Work,* **56** (3), 271-275. [U,P,*** with Philip Gilligan]

2010

Art. 8 *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making A Difference,* Bristol, Policy Press (R,P, *** with Philip Gilligan).

Chapters in book

Ch1a: 'Introduction', Chapter 1, 1-14 [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

Ch2b: 'Frameworks and models to develop cultural competence in relation to religion and belief', Chapter 3, 35- 52 [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

Ch3c: 'Older people, religion and belief', Chapter 5, 67-81. [R, P, *]

Ch6d: 'Adult abuse, religion and belief', Chapter 6, 92-105 [R, P, *]

Ch7e:'Mental health, religion and belief', Chapter 7, 107- 122 [R, P, *]

Ch8f: 'Learning disabilities, religion and belief', Chapter 8, 123 – 136 [R, P, *]

Ch9g: 'Concluding Remarks', Chapter 11,165-172. [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

Ch10i: 'Appendix: A brief guide to religions and beliefs: sources of further information', 173-181 [R, P, *** with Philip Gilligan]

All of the above chapters are published in S. Furness and P. Gilligan (2010) *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making A Difference,* Bristol, Policy Press. See back cover insert.

Appendix 2: Non-submitted publications

Peer reviewed articles

Furness, S. and Gilligan, P. (2004) 'Fit for Purpose: Issues from practice placements, practice teaching and the assessment of students' practice', *Social Work Education,* **23** (4), 465-479.

Torry, B., Furness, S. and Wilkinson, P. (2005) 'The importance of agency culture and support in recruiting and retaining social workers to supervise students on placement', *Practice*, **17**(1), 29-38.

Furness, S (2006) 'Recognising and addressing elder abuse in care homes: Views from residents and managers', *The Journal of Adult Protection,* **8**(1), 33-50.

Furness, S. (2007) 'Promoting control and interdependence for those living in care homes by establishing 'friends of care home' groups', *Quality in Ageing,* **8** (3), 24-31.

Furness, S. (2007) 'An enquiry into students' motivations to train as social workers in England', *Journal of Social Work*, **7**(2), 239-253.

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Chapters in books

Furness, S. (1998) 'Elder abuse within a residential setting'. In J. Cheetham and M.A.F. Kazi (eds) *The Working of Social Work,* London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, pages 85-100.

Furness, S. (2011) ‘Risk and Choice’. In T.Dening, and A. Milne, (eds) *Mental Health and Care Homes*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pages 313-325.

Furness, S. and Torry, B. (2009) ‘Establishing ‘Friends of Care Home’ Groups’. In K.A.Froggatt, S. Davies and J. Meyer (eds) *Understanding Care Homes: A Research and Development Perspective,* London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Report

Macey, M., Carling, A. with Furness, S. (2010) *The Power of Belief? Review of the Evidence on Religion or Belief and Equalities in Great Britain.* Bradford scholars http://hdl.handle.net/10454/4394